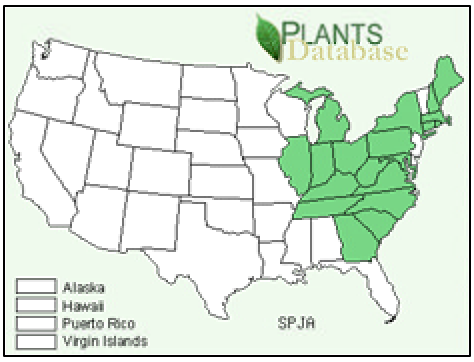
JAPANESE SPIRAEA or Japanese Meadowsweet

***Spiraea japonica* L. f.**

NATIVE RANGE: Japan, Korea and China

DESCRIPTION: Japanese spiraea, also called Japanese meadowsweet, is a perennial, deciduous shrub in the rose family that grows to 4 to 6 feet in height and width. Erect stems are brown to reddish-brown, round in cross-section and sometimes hairy. The alternate egg-shaped leaves are 1-3 inches long and have toothed margins. Rosy-pink flowers clusters are borne at the tips of branches. Seeds, measuring about 1/10 inch in length, are contained in small lustrous capsules.

ECOLOGICAL THREAT: Japanese spiraea can rapidly take over disturbed areas. Growing populations creep into meadows, forest openings, and other sites. Seeds of Japanese spiraea last for many years in the soil, making its control and the restoration of native vegetation especially difficult. A single Japanese spiraea plant produces hundreds of small seeds that are naturally dispersed by water and deposited along stream banks. Seeds may also be carried in fill dirt and establish new populations in the highly disturbed soil of construction sites.



DISTRIBUTION IN THE UNITED STATES: Japanese spiraea is now naturalized throughout much of the Northeast, Southeast and Midwest.

HABITAT IN THE UNITED STATES: Japanese spiraea is adapted to disturbed areas, tolerates a wide range of soil conditions and grows in full sun to partial shade. It is commonly found growing along streams and rivers, forest edges, roadsides, and in successional fields and power line right-of-ways.

CONTROL & MANAGEMENT OPTIONS: Cutting or mowing Japanese spiraea shrubs may be effective for small, initial populations or for environmentally sensitive areas where herbicides cannot be used. Repeated mowing or cutting will control the spread of spiraea, but will not eradicate it. Spiraea resprouts after cutting, making repeated cutting necessary to exhaust the plants energy reserves. Stems should be cut at least once per growing season, prior to seed production, and cut as close to ground level as possible.

Foliar herbicide applications should be considered for large thickets of Japanese spiraea where the risk to non-target plants is determined to be minimal. Applications may be made almost any time of year, as long as the air temperature is above 65ºF, to ensure absorption of the chemical by the plant. Apply a 2% solution of glyphosate (e.g., Roundup or Rodeo) or triclopyr (Garlon) and water plus a 0.5% non-ionic surfactant to thoroughly wet all leaves. Use low pressure and a coarse spray pattern to reduce spray-drift to non-target species.

Reference: www.nps.gov, http://plants.usda.gov